

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Los Angeles Region**

**Executive Officer's Report
Dennis A. Dickerson, Executive Officer**

May 18, 1998

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- *** The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption
- *** For a list of simple ways to reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see the tips at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/news/echallenge.html>

Two Board Member Positions Vacant

Two vacancies currently exist on the Regional Board following the departure of Board members Marilyn Lyon and Boyd Condie. Marilyn Lyon and Boyd Condie both served on the Board for nearly a year and actively participated in the Board's Task Committee for Improving Board Meetings. Marilyn Lyon also served on the planning committee for the successful storm water conference that was jointly sponsored by the Regional Board and the Southern California Association of Governments and the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Program. Both members were well regarded and their loss to the Board will be keenly felt.

Los Angeles River Nitrogen (TMDL)

On Saturday, April 18th, the Regional Board released a draft proposal to interested parties outlining a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nutrients in the LA River. This technical document, prepared by Dr. Ana Corado, is proposed as the basis for a strategy to reduce nutrient loads into the stream system.

The goal of the TMDL is to determine measures needed to meet water quality objectives in the river, in particular, the ammonia water quality objective. The nitrogen compounds are a source of concern because nitrite and nitrate are toxic to humans, and ammonia and nitrite are toxic to aquatic life. Also, nutrients may produce algae blooms and eutrophication in the river that can lead to high pH values. The TMDL report contains background information about the river, describes the water quality assessment and modeling, proposes effluent limits for the water reclamation plants that discharge into Los Angeles River, and recommends other studies to reduce the uncertainty of the Los Angeles River water quality model.

This is a preliminary technical document which will be the subject of extensive review and public comment. Development of this TMDL and its approval by the Regional Board and the development of implementation strategies is expected to be completed not later than June 2002, in conformance with the Basin Plan ammonia standard which go into effect at that time. The release of this document should initiate substantial discussions between the Regional Board, the Los Angeles River Watershed Council, and other stakeholders. Should you wish more information regarding this proposal, please contact Dr. Corado at (213) 266-7579. Initial written comments on the draft TMDL report should be submitted to the Regional Board by June 1, 1998. Subsequent drafts of this

document will also be subject to public comment.

Workshop Scheduled for Total Maximum Daily Loads to Control Trash in the LA River, San Gabriel River, and Ballona Creek

A workshop has been scheduled for June 8, 1998, to begin a discussion on the possible development of a Total Maximum Daily Load for trash in the LA River, San Gabriel River, and Ballona Creek. The workshop will be held in the auditorium of the Air Resources Board, 9528 Telstar Ave., in El Monte at 1:30 p.m. The workshop is planned to address the longstanding problem of trash that is washed into our waterways and then deposited in those waterways, harbors, Santa Monica Bay, and onto our beaches. Under the Clean Water Act, water bodies that have been found to be impaired (as these waters have) are required to have TMDLs developed to limit the amount of the pollutant allowed into the water body. The workshop is intended to provide an opportunity to discuss the TMDL concept and how it may be implemented should it be adopted by the Regional Board.

Board Members and Staff Attend Conference on Storm Water

On May 9th, several board members and staff participated in a conference on storm water held at the Wrigley Institute for the Environment. The conference was an opportunity for the discussion of this important issue as we are well into the implementation of the existing Los Angeles Municipal Storm Water Permit and as the planning horizon for the next municipal permit approaches. Cal/EPA Secretary Peter Rooney and USEPA Regional Administrator Felicia Marcus also participated in the event.

Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project released its State of the Bay 1998 report at a press conference held at Venice Pier on April 7, 1998. Bay Watershed Council Chair Burt Margolin presented the findings of the report; Senator Tom Hayden, Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl, LA City Councilwoman Ruth Galanter and Redondo Beach Mayor Pro Tem Robert Pinzler all spoke of the need for Bay restoration funding. Board member Hamid Nahai, also attended the event and spoke to the work of the Regional Board in contributing to the improvements in Santa Monica Bay. The report, "Taking the Pulse of the Bay," utilizes a set of environmental indicators to report on the Bay's water quality, the health risks of swimming in the Bay and eating Bay seafood, and the impacts -- both natural and man-made -- on Bay habitats and resources. In addition, the report summarizes progress made in implementing the Bay Restoration Plan and actions needed to restore and protect the Bay into the future.

New Spill Report Available

The Regional Board routinely receives many spill reports every month from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), dischargers, and others. The incidents reported during January-March 1998 have been summarized for the first time in Section I of the Quarterly Report of Violations and Enforcement Actions, located elsewhere in this Executive Officer's Report. A quarterly spill report summary will be a regular part of future Executive Officer's Reports.

The spill summary lists all reported spills by the watershed in which they occurred, and identifies whether or not those spills reached a waterway (such as a street gutter, storm drain or dry creek bed), or entered a receiving water. Typically, less than half the reported spills affect a receiving water. However, during the heavy rains of February, there was a noticeable increase in the number of spills which affected receiving waters. In particular, sewage spills, caused by overloaded collection systems, increased from 6 in January to 53 in February. By March, when the rains abated, only 3 sewage spills occurred which affected receiving waters.

Regional Board Staff Meet with USEPA Senior Managers

On April 17th, senior managers from the Regional Board staff met with their counterparts at the USEPA in San Francisco. The purpose of the meeting was an opportunity to brief USEPA on Regional Board initiatives and the progress being made to implement workplans that are funded by grants received from USEPA. The meeting was productive and significant issues of concern to both the Regional Board and USEPA were reviewed.

303(d) List/Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

On April 13, 1998, the Regional Board adopted an updated list of impaired waters (303d List) for the Los Angeles Region. On May 14, 1998, the State Board held a workshop to hear public comments on the updated lists prepared by all nine Regional Boards. Mark Smythe represented the Los Angeles Region at this workshop and responded to questions raised about the listings approved by the Board.

April 23rd Open House Attracts Visitors

The Regional Board held an Open House for visitors on April 23rd as part of our effort to commemorate Earth Day. The event attracted over 35 individuals. Regional Board staff offered a series of presentations that provided an overview of some of the programs we administer and reviews of the event were generally favorable.

Monitoring Committee

On April 30, 1998, approximately 35 people met in the Regional Board office to discuss monitoring and reporting issues in the Region. Persons in attendance included representatives of public agencies located in both Ventura County and Los Angeles County, stormwater dischargers, environmental entities and consulting firms. Major items of concern were focused on data being submitted and not reviewed, improving data handling, consistency between permits, and not following through on the information prepared by the previously established advisory committees.

The participants generally agreed that the committee was useful. It may be too large, however, to effectively work on most the potential areas of improvement. The final determination about subcommittees or working groups will be based upon their response to the draft minutes and issues summary that will be mailed to participants in the next two weeks. The initial working groups could center around the following basic areas: electronic data management, effluent and reclamation monitoring, stormwater monitoring, and receiving water monitoring. The participants indicated that the last item may need to be further divided by concerns over surface water and groundwater impacts. The entire group has agreed to meet again July 14, 1998.

Newhall Ranch Specific Plan

Newhall Ranch proposes to develop 11,963 acres into a planned community of 25,000 homes along the Santa Clara River between Santa Clarita and the LA/Ventura County line. The development was approved late last year by the County of Los Angeles Planning Commission, but has not yet been approved by the Board of Supervisors. Board staff Mark Smythe, along with representatives of other regulatory and resource agencies, participated in a meeting on April 29, 1998 with staff from the office of LA County Supervisor Michael Antonovich. The meeting included a description of the anticipated impacts from the project, such as pollutant loads from urban/storm water runoff and discharges of domestic and commercial wastewaters, degradation of habitat from alteration of streambeds, and discussion of proposals to address these concerns.

San Gabriel Valley Groundwater Cleanup Update

On April 27, 1998, the League of Women Voters sponsored a forum in El Monte to assess the groundwater cleanup status in the San Gabriel Valley. Co-sponsors were the San Gabriel Basin

Water Quality Authority and the San Gabriel Valley Water Association. Ten panelists discussed their entities involvement in the evaluation and cleanup activities. Panelists included representatives of USEPA, Regional Board staff, water supply entities, two cities and local interest groups.

Discussion was centered on the inherent delays in the Superfund process and the attempt to have accelerated cleanup in the El Monte and South El Monte areas. Generally panelist supported the accelerated cleanup concept. The principal question was, "Who should pay the cost of cleanup?" Regional Board support of early action was emphasized and the concept that local citizens could contribute to the cost of cleanup if they so desired. However, the Regional Board has not mandated any such contribution in the past.

The majority of questions from the audience indicated a concern about any contribution by individual citizens to pay for the cleanup of industrial discharges. City and water industry representatives indicated the increased revenues from productive businesses could outweigh any individual cost.

Los Angeles Basin Contaminated Sediments Task Force

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Coastal Commission have begun the process to develop a long-term management plan for the dredging and disposal of contaminated sediments from coastal waters adjacent to the County of Los Angeles. Task force meetings were held in March and April, resulting in general agreement on the objectives and organizational structure for the task force and its working groups.

Catherine Tyrrell and Michael Lyons, Regional Board staff, and Tami Grove and Jim Raives, Coastal Commission staff, held a briefing on May 11, 1998 with Senator Betty Karnette, author of legislation (SB 673) which provided the funding and mandate for the Contaminated Sediments Task Force. The briefing was offered to review progress to date and to discuss the anticipated work products and the proposed schedule of activities for the next four years. Tami Grove and Jim Raives plan to present an information item on the progress of the Task Force to the Coastal Commission Board at its May meeting.

Storm Water Violations

During the month of April, the Regional Board issued 131 Notices of Violation to industrial/commercial facilities that failed to submit annual reports, as required under the General Permit for Storm Water Activities. Also during the month of April, the Regional Board submitted 7 Notices of Violation to non-filers in the Ballona Creek watershed (i.e. industrial companies that failed to file a Notice of Intent to comply with requirements of the General Permit for Storm Water Activities). These Notices of Violation require extensive follow-up with each facility to which they are issued to ensure that the required information is submitted or that the facility corrects its current operational status.

Mission Canyon No. 6 Landfill CAO

On March 16, 1998, the Regional Board issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) to American Golf Corporation, Castle and Cook, County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (CSDLAC), and Mountaingate Open Space Maintenance Association (MOSMA) for unacceptable conditions at the closed Mission Canyon No. 6 Landfill. Slumping of benches, broken dndrains, severe erosion, mudslides, and saturation of landfill slopes threatened the integrity of the landfill. In addition, groundwater monitoring wells detected pollutants emanating from the landfill, possibly exacerbated by the conditions of the landfill. Pursuant to the CAO, Castle and Cook implemented emergency measures to grade and temporarily stabilize slopes and control drainage. MOSMA has taken the lead to connect the underdrain system at the landfill to the industrial sewer. CSDLAC has cooperated by resampling the groundwater monitoring wells and the underdrain. Additional workplans for groundwater investigation and postclosure maintenance are due to the Regional Board by May 31, 1998.

Toland Road Landfill

On April 1, 1998, the State Water Resources Control Board held a workshop to hear testimony regarding a petition submitted by Ventura County Citizens to Stop Toland Road Landfill (petitioners). Testimony was given suggesting the possibility that a large scale landslide may conceal evidence of Holocene faulting in the northern portion of the site. At a public meeting on April 16, 1998, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted Order WQ 98-02 denying the contentions of the petitioners and upholding this Regional Board's Order 96-053 allowing expansion of Toland Road Landfill. However, Order WQ 98-02 did order this Regional Board to modify Finding 13 of Order 96-053 to clarify the definition of a Holocene fault.

Charnock Wellfield

There are a total of 28 Potentially Responsible Parties (PRP's) remaining within the Charnock Sub-basin Investigation Area. The majority of the sites have submitted final reports for completed hydrogeologic assessments. These final reports are currently under review. As final reports are reviewed, any sites that require additional soil and/or groundwater assessment to determine the extent of MTBE pollution or any cleanup needed will be directed to perform the work at this time. Based upon the results of subsurface assessment and pipeline testing completed along the Chevron pipeline that traverses the Charnock Sub-basin a work directive and supplemental information request was sent to the Chevron Pipeline Division.

The activities within the Charnock Sub-basin Investigation Area are moving into Phase II enforcement activities, where the Regional Board, in conjunction with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) will begin to notify PRP's that have discharged MTBE to soil and groundwater of their obligation to design and implement remediation actions to return the Charnock Sub-basin to beneficial use as a drinking water source.

Arcadia Wellfield

Phase 2B Hydrogeologic Assessment activities in the area surrounding the Arcadia Wellfield was completed as of April 27, 1998. An extension was granted, until June 18, 1998, to Mobil Oil Corporation to submit the final report containing the results of all hydrogeologic assessment work and aquifer testing completed (Phase 2A and 2B) at the Arcadia Wellfield. The Interim Mitigation Groundwater Extraction and Treatment System has been expanded to include additional recovery wells to further reduce the mass of residual MTBE in the shallow aquifer underlying the site. Groundwater recovery operations within the shallow aquifer will be maintained at approximately 20 gallons per minute. A Workplan for the formal destruction of Arcadia Well No. 1 has been approved and will commence on May 18, 1998, with the final report due by July 1, 1998. The Treatment Feasibility Study and Remedial Action Plan for the production zone aquifer are due to the Regional Board by July 21, 1998.

State Department of Health Services Update on Direct Domestic Use of Extremely Impaired Sources

Regional Board and USEPA staff together with representatives from Chevron, Shell, Exxon, and Mobil have initiated discussions with the SDHS-Drinking Water Field Operations Branch to evaluate separate proposals for the Charnock Wellfield and Arcadia Wellfield to determine permit conditions required for treatment and reuse of groundwater for domestic purposes. Scopes of work are to be developed by May 15, 1998, to identify the elements of the evaluation process and specific permitting requirements.

AB 592 (Kuehl)

This bill requires, in part, that the Regional Board collect and report MTBE data (and other

oxygenates) to water purveyors within the region of the state, on a quarterly basis. The first report required under this legislation was sent by the Regional Board on April 10, 1998, to approximately 295 water purveyors identified within the Los Angeles Regional Board's jurisdiction. Separate reports were compiled for Los Angeles County and Ventura County containing approximately 1000 sites that have tested soil and/or groundwater for MTBE. To obtain information about this report, please contact Mr. Y. Rong at (213) 266-7604. The report contains basic information related to MTBE, MTBE concentrations and basic distribution data in groundwater, MTBE data correlation with other site factors, and future study to be performed related to MTBE impacts.

UST Working Group

The third UST Working Group meeting was held at the Regional Board's office on May 4, 1998. A total of 19 people attended the meeting. The attendees represented major oil companies (Chevron and Arco), Southern California Gas Company, consultants, environmental organizations, banking, legal profession, local agencies for UST program oversight, and Regional Board staff.

This meeting focused on UST system upgrades required by the December 22, 1998 deadline. Regional Board staff James Kuykendall and David Bacharowski presented the Regional Board's perspective regarding the upgrade requirements and the challenges this deadline poses to the Regional Board UST Program. Mr. Carl Sjoberg from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works described the Local Implementing Agency's (LIA's) procedures in meeting this deadline. Mr. Travis Ervin of Chevron and Mr. Kyle Christie of Arco also presented the progress in complying with the deadline requirements for the respective oil companies.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled on August 10, 1998. The topics of interest identified by the UST Working Group members may include (1) certificate of UST upgrade by the 1998 deadline, (2) UST regulations with respect to small business, (3) the perspective of the banking industry regarding property transfer for UST sites, and (4) site closure with residual hydrocarbons.

El Rio Project

El Rio is a small, rural, low-income community in Ventura County that is located within the Oxnard Forebay (an important groundwater recharge area). The 6,000 people in El Rio rely upon septic tanks for disposal of wastewaters. On April 13, 1998, the Regional Board adopted Resolution No. 98-05, requesting state financial assistance through a grant program for a sewer project for El Rio. State Board staff are recommending to the State Board that the project not be given grant funding. On May 13, 1998, John Slezak and Wendy Phillips were scheduled to attend a public hearing conducted by the State Board to offer information in support of the grant to El Rio and to present Regional Board Resolution No. 98-05 for consideration by the State Board.

Whittier Narrows Operable Unit: Feasibility Study

The existing Whittier Narrows Feasibility Study (Study) has been modified in response to increasing volatile organic compounds contamination in the groundwater of the western portion of the Whittier Narrows Operable Unit (WNOU). This Study examines the practicality of creating a groundwater containment system in the vicinity of the (WNOU). The report examines the potential, institutional, environmental, and cost aspects that will need to be addressed during implementation of the containment.

Perchlorate Treatability Studies: Baldwin Park Operable Unit

Bench scale treatability studies for perchlorate have shown to be feasible using biological and ion exchange treatment systems. Pilot scale studies are now being planned for the Big Dalton Well in San Gabriel Valley. The purpose of the pilot studies is to demonstrate whether both treatment

systems are capable of treating actual "basin water" in the San Gabriel Valley. Both treatment systems are also capable of removing nitrates effectively in the groundwater.

Regional Board Outreach

On April 16, 1998, Alex Carlos of this Regional Board presented an overview of the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valley groundwater cleanup program at the University of Southern California's Department of Geological Sciences. The seminar was part of a guest speaker series in the environmental geology class. Presented material included theoretical information and case studies for illustration.

On May 8th, Dennis Dickerson and Mark Smythe attended the meeting of the Natural Resources and Environment Committee of the Greater Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to discuss TMDLs and especially to introduce the concept of a "Trash" TMDL to that audience.

On May 12th, Dennis Dickerson participated on a panel to provide a regional perspective to a seminar on the Clean Water Act sponsored by the Water Environment Federation, the American Bar Association, and the USEPA.

On May 13th, Dennis Dickerson and Jorge Leon spoke at an annual seminar on enforcement issues associated with hazardous waste management and the law. The session afforded an opportunity to present the Regional Board's enforcement initiative to an audience that practices in this field.

Freedom of Information Act and Public Records Act Requests for the Month of March 1998.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Public Record Act (PRA) requests to review or copy public documents are a very important part of the work at the Regional Board. The FOIA and PRA cover most of the documents at the Regional Board. Recently, the State legislature adopted statutory language requiring that these requests be tracked by the Regional Boards. The FOIA and PRA require agencies to provide a response on the availability of the requested document within 10 working days (FOIA) or 10 calendar days (PRA) of receiving the request. The Regional Board has developed a procedure and a database to track these requests.

During the month of March, 1998, 15 FOIA PRA requests were received and processed, and in all cases, a response was provided within the mandated time frame.

Watershed Issues

Calleguas Creek Watershed

The Water Quality/Water Resources Subcommittee is in the process of drafting a Water Resources/Water Quality Chapter in the Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan. Subcommittee members have developed a list of their goals and objectives for water quality and water resources and are working to clarify participants' goals and objectives, identify possible solutions to problems, pinpoint concrete actions which will be taken to address the problems, filter out long-term from short-term goals, and reach agreement on what issues to deal with first. Agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and concerns over use of household water softeners and their contributions of chlorides to treatment plants are two early action items that have been identified. The subcommittee last met on April 3.

The Habitat & Recreation Subcommittee met on April 14. Items for discussion included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Restoration Project (in the feasibility study phase), a presentation on GIS-based planning for the watershed, and progress on the watershed's wetland and riparian restoration plan. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on June 16.

The Public Education/Outreach Subcommittee is currently working on a newsletter to cover watershed issues and events.

The full Management committee will meet on May 6. Agenda items will include subcommittee reports, a presentation of the draft Watershed Management Plan work program and one on an early action plan for the watershed. Additionally, an informational breakfast program for the community was held on April 16. Information about the management committee and its subcommittees can be found at "www.calleguas.com".

The Surface Water Element of the Calleguas Creek Characterization Study Monitoring Program has been approved by the Executive Officer. Monitoring is scheduled to begin in June 1998.

Los Angeles River Watershed

The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council met on April 15. The meeting included presentations about the Irwindale gravel pits, how to use GIS in watershed management, and the CALFED process to restore the San Francisco Bay Delta. In addition, the Watershed Council organized a Watershed Conference: "From Drain to Dream" to present the Watershed Council's vision for the Los Angeles River. Regional Board staff participated in the organization of the conference, and presented the First Edition of the Los Angeles River Water Quality Characterization Report. The report focuses on beneficial uses, water quality assessment, and Regional Board programs to improve water quality in the upper watershed.

Santa Monica Bay Watershed

The Modeling and Monitoring Subcommittee of the Malibu Creek Watershed Advisory Council met on March 24 to continue work on developing a watershed-wide monitoring program for the Malibu Creek Watershed. Future meetings have not yet been scheduled. The subcommittee has requested a six-month extension (from May 3 to November 3, 1998) from the Executive Officer to finish this task.

Watershed Management Initiative Chapter

Each Regional Board is in the process of a very important and labor intensive effort to produce a detailed description, or "chapter", on how that Board is implementing watershed management in the Region. The chapter will eventually become the basis for funding decisions including allocating money for monitoring, TMDL development, and grant funding disbursement. The original due date of April 30 has been extended to May 15.

SPILLS REPORTED DURING MARCH 1998

ALL REPORTED SPILLS

Chemical.....	11
Crude oil.....	12
Diesel.....	17
Gasoline.....	3
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....	8
Oil.....	7
Other.....	1
Sewage.....	5
Waste water.....	2
Vapors.....	10
Total.....	76

SPILLS WHICH ENTERED WATERWAYS OR WATERS

Chemical.....3
Crude oil.....5
Diesel.....6
Gasoline.....0
Miscellaneous petroleum products.....6
Oil.....2
Other.....0
Sewage.....3
Waste water.....2

Total.....27

ENFORCEMENT

SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS - MARCH 1-31, 1998

Formal Enforcement Actions
Cleanup and Abatement Order.....2
Administrative Civil Liability.....2

Administrative Enforcement Actions
Permit violations.....7

Administrative Enforcement Actions for Overdue / Incomplete Reports
Technical monitoring reports.....14
Site assessment plans.....4
Site assessment reports.....5
Site remedial action plans.....2

Administrative Enforcement Actions for Stormwater Permits
Failed to submit Storm Water Annual Report.....4
Total Enforcement Actions for March.....40